

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Omaha District, Corps of Engineers
6014 U.S. Post Office and Courthouse
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

DR 690-1-11

MROPO-E

Regulation
No. 690-1-11

9 October 1980

Civilian Personnel
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. Purpose. The purpose of this regulation is to provide guidance for assisting employees whose personal problems have an adverse impact on job performance or disrupt interpersonal relationships with other employees in the work place.
2. Applicability. This regulation applies to all employees of the Omaha District and serviced organizations who have completed a probationary or trial period.
3. References.
 - a. ER 690-1-710.
 - b. DR 600-1-2.
 - c. DR 690-1-751.
4. Objective. The objective of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is to identify and assist employees with behavioral problems which impact upon work performance or disturb interpersonal relations with other employees in the immediate work environment. Employees will be assisted by offering professional diagnostic counseling and further referral to established community facilities as sources of further treatment and rehabilitative care. The EAP does not replace the day-to-day counseling responsibilities of managers and supervisors, but does offer a management tool when an employee requires diagnostic counseling and possible rehabilitative treatment. Another objective is to provide an opportunity for employees to get counseling service without their supervisors or other employees ever becoming aware of their using the service of the program.
5. Policy.
 - a. The Omaha District recognizes that personal problems can have an adverse effect on an employee's job performance. It is also recognized that most personal problems can be dealt with successfully when identified early and referred to appropriate resources. The EAP is designed to deal with a broad range of human relations problems such as emotional/behavioral disorders, family and marital discord, financial, legal, chemical dependence, and other personal problems.
 - b. An employee's personal life outside of the work place is not of official concern to the Omaha District except when it may adversely affect job performance, interpersonal relations with other employees in the work environment, or reflects discredit on the Omaha District.

c. Participation in the program will not jeopardize an employee's job security and/or promotional opportunities.

d. All records and discussions of personal problems will be handled in a confidential manner as are other medical records. These records will be kept by the designated counseling resource and will not become part of the employee's official personnel folder.

e. Employees who suspect or recognize that they have a personal problem are encouraged to seek counseling and information on a confidential basis by contacting the Methodist Hospital which has been contracted to provide such services before the problem noticeably interferes with job performance.

f. There will be no monetary charge for the first three visits for diagnostic counseling services for the employee. Since these services are provided by a contractor, three diagnostic counseling visits may be provided to immediate family members of employees covered by the EAP whenever such services are instrumental in resolving the problems of the employee. If costs are incurred for rehabilitation services that are not covered by insurance or other benefits, the cost will be the responsibility of the employee.

g. Sick leave may be granted for diagnostic counseling treatment or rehabilitation on the same basis as it is granted for ordinary health problems. Annual leave or leave without pay also may be granted if sick leave is not appropriate or is otherwise not available. Employees are expected to get permission to use leave but do not have to inform the immediate supervisor that they are going to visit the EAP professional counselor.

6. Responsibilities.

a. Commander and Top Management. The support and endorsement of top management is essential to the success of the EAP. The Omaha District fully supports the Employee Assistance Program.

b. Supervisors. The supervisor is responsible for supporting the program through careful and consistent attention to evaluation of the performance of those whom they supervise. The performance evaluation process is two-fold with the initiative provided by the supervisor who recognizes a continuous job performance problem. As soon as it is determined that ordinary supervisory methods of discussion and listening are not bringing about improvement, and before initiating any formal action, the supervisor will consult the Management-Employee Relations Branch personnel for advice on how to proceed. Supervisors should unhesitatingly offer employees information on available health and counseling services of the EAP. Supervisors will not attempt to diagnose or treat the difficulties of employees. The EAP was instituted to provide this professional help.

c. Employees. The employee is responsible for:

(1) Recognizing that a medical/behavioral problem may have an effect on job performance or interpersonal relations in the work environment.

(2) Seeking appropriate assistance in problem resolution either anonymously by contacting the Methodist Hospital counselors directly, through assistance of the immediate supervisor, or the EAP Coordinator in the Management-Employee Relations Branch.

(3) Bringing job performance to an acceptable level through resolution of the problem.

d. Personnel Office. The responsibilities of the Personnel Office are as follows:

(1) General Responsibilities. The Management-Employee Relations (MER) Branch of the Personnel Office is assigned key program development, implementation and review responsibilities consistent with other personnel management functions. As such, it will provide advice and assistance in the application of the policies, procedures and guidelines of the EAP. It is the responsibility of the MER Branch of the Personnel Office to assist supervisors in identifying and assisting employees with problems. Systems relating to discipline, grievances, labor relations, position classification, placement, etc., are a means of identifying individuals with work-related problems (e.g., absenteeism, security violations, difficulties with co-workers).

(2) Specific Responsibilities. The Management-Employee Relations Branch is specifically responsible for implementing the EAP, arranging for educational and informational materials, arranging or conducting supervisory and employee orientation, developing and maintaining counseling capability, establishing and maintaining liaison with contractor resources, and evaluating the program and reporting on results and effectiveness. The MER Branch will arrange for appropriate diagnostic consultation either with the employee or the appropriate supervisor, insuring compliance with the confidentiality requirements.

7. The EAP Contractor. The Omaha District contracted the Employee Assistance Program Services Department of Methodist Hospital for their professional counseling services.

a. In the Omaha Metropolitan area the professional counselors for the Omaha District EAP are Mr. Joseph P. Borsh and Mr. William E. Ivins. Counseling services are located at Indian Hills Education Center, 8501 West Dodge Road, Omaha, Nebraska. They can be reached by calling (402) 397-3000, Extension 3772 or 3773 and ask for them by name. After 27 October 1980, the counselors can be reached by calling (402) 390-4163 or 4165.

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b. Civilian employees in the field offices and serviced organizations outside the Omaha area can use the program by calling collect to the numbers listed in paragraph 7a and asking for the counselors by name. These counselors will help with the problem, and when necessary will give the caller the name of a professional counselor and telephone number available in their vicinity. As professional counselors are sub-contracted for the employees of the area facilities, the information will be furnished to them immediately through official channels.

8. Referral Procedures. The two components of the referral process are employee self-initiated (voluntary) and management initiated.

a. Employee initiated referrals.

(1) If employees decide to seek assistance on their own and do not want anyone to know about their using the EAP, they may get in touch with the professional counselors directly and will receive counseling. When it is appropriate and necessary, the employee may be referred to other staff personnel of the Methodist Hospital or to other community resources by the counselors. The employee will use annual leave or sick leave for self-initiated use of the program. The use of excused absences or administrative leave is not authorized. Under this arrangement the professional counselor is forbidden to give the name of the employee to the supervisor or those MER personnel administering the program without the employee's written consent.

(2) Employees may also use the EAP by seeking assistance through the supervisor or the MER Branch on a voluntary (self) referral basis if they so desire or if it serves their own self-interest.

(3) The professional counselors will conduct the necessary interview assessment, and formulate an action plan for assisting the employee in resolving the problem.

(4) Employees are encouraged to permit contact with the supervisor when necessary, as may be required if a rehabilitation program is agreed upon and accepted by the employee which will require the use of leave or leave without pay.

(5) If an employee drops out of a rehabilitative treatment program, professional counselors will document this action in their case file.

(6) Supervisors or MER personnel will not be furnished information about the nature of the problem as given to the professional counselors unless the employee gives the professional counselors permission in writing to do so. Reports received by the MER personnel will be statistical in nature and the identity of the employee cannot be ascertained.

(7) Employees are requested to take their government health insurance booklet with them when using the EAP. The professional counselors will assist in ascertaining if any expenses involved are covered by the policy.

b. Management initiated referrals.

(1) A supervisor who is aware of deterioration in an employee's work accomplishment, or altered behavior patterns through the routine monitoring of job performance, i.e., attendance, production, tardiness, will begin keeping records and will specifically document the nature of work deterioration and behavioral changes.

(2) In accordance with applicable personnel procedures, the supervisor will conduct an informal discussion with the employee discussing the need for improvement in job performance or in interpersonal relations with other employees. The supervisor will offer the use of the EAP if the employee feels he/she has a problem.

(3) An agreement should then be reached between the supervisor and employee on the remedial action to be taken (e.g., eliminate tardiness, provide doctor's statement for absence due to illness). A time frame for resolution of the problem will be established; the discussion documented; and, the supervisor will continue to monitor job performance.

(4) In the event the performance problem continues, the supervisor will consult with the MER Branch to discuss the nature of the problem and the available courses of action. Upon presentation of sufficient evidence in support of unacceptable performance on the part of the employee, the supervisor may refer the employee to the MER Branch for referral to the EAP.

(5) The MER Branch will offer referral to the EAP and assistance in scheduling an appointment with the professional counselors. The employee will be advised that the decision to accept assistance is voluntary. Employees who reject referral will be returned to the work-site and the refusal will be documented.

(6) If the employee accepts referral, the professional counselors will attempt to determine the underlying cause of the problem; develop an action plan for resolution of the problem; determine the appropriate resource for further help, and explain the service to be provided to the employee.

(7) An employee who is management referred to use the EAP and the employee voluntarily accepts the referral, the time used to fulfill an appointment is considered duty time and not charged to leave.

(8) The professional counselors, with the written permission of the employee, will inform the supervisor of any necessary work absence or other special considerations necessary to the rehabilitation process. No information regarding the employee's specific problem will be transmitted without the written consent of the employee. The use of sick or other leave will be allowed in accordance with appropriate regulations when the employee enters into a rehabilitative program.

(9) If rehabilitation or other assistance proves ineffectual, or if the employee refuses to cooperate, documentation will be made of that fact and appropriate action will be initiated promptly.

9. Relationship to Disciplinary Actions. The EAP provides nondisciplinary procedures by which an employee with a personal problem affecting job performance is offered rehabilitation assistance. Initiation of adverse actions for absenteeism, misconduct, and marginal or unacceptable performance related to personal problems will be postponed for 90 consecutive days for employees who are enrolled and satisfactorily progressing in an EAP rehabilitation program, unless retention in a duty status might result in damage to Government property or personal injury to the employee or others. In the latter instance, consideration should be given to approving official leave for all or a portion of the rehabilitation period, if appropriate. If the employee refuses rehabilitation assistance or, upon completion of the rehabilitation period (NTE 90 consecutive days), fails to achieve satisfactory job performance and conduct, appropriate adverse action will be initiated. Previously initiated adverse actions in which the final decision letter has not been issued will be deferred upon the employee's enrollment in the EAP, providing the employee has not previously refused rehabilitation assistance. Such adverse action may be initiated if, at the end of the 90 consecutive days active rehabilitation, job performance or conduct is unacceptable or if, at any time during the active rehabilitation phase, the employee refuses such assistance. Once an adverse action has been initiated against an employee who previously refused rehabilitation assistance, the proposed adverse action need not be delayed as a result of the employee's subsequent request for rehabilitation.

10. Confidentiality.

a. Records, including any information whether recorded or not, pertaining to the identity, diagnosis, or treatment of any employee or employee's family dependent which is maintained in connection with carrying out the Employee Assistance Program, shall be confidential on the same basis as medical records. Information about participants, including their attendance or absence, physical whereabouts, when in rehabilitative treatment is confidential. All employees, including those personnel who administer the EAP, are also prohibited from making implicit or negative disclosure about employees who use the program.


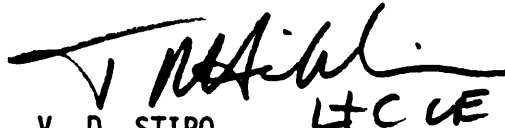
b. Disclosure is authorized only when an employee gives written consent. The employee must state, in writing, the name of the person, organizational component, or both, to whom disclosure can be made, the specific type of information to be released, and the purpose of the disclosure.

c. In management referral cases, the name of the employee can be used for administrative purposes. The nature of the problem cannot be revealed to the referring supervisor or MER personnel without written permission of the employee.

d. Disclosure can be made when an employee's records are subpoenaed by a court.

11. Relationship with Labor Organizations. The support and active participation of labor organizations will contribute materially to the success of the EAP. Union officers and stewards can be influential in developing and maintaining employee confidence in the EAP program. Therefore, they are encouraged to refer employees coming to them for guidance to the EAP for additional assistance.

12. Coverage. Since the subject of this regulation is of widespread interest, distribution has been made to all employees.

 
V. D. STIPO
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